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No. 327

THE LITERARY CLUB

A Comedy in One Act

BY

MARION R. O'KEEFE

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THE LITERARY CLUB.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. LAW TREY.....*President of the Literary Club*
MRS. LOVETT, MRS. PAWKINS, MISS PARDELL, MISS
GRIMES.....*Members of the Literary Club*
MISS FORCE.....*Teacher in one of the imperial
schools*
MARU.....*The Emperor's niece, one of Miss
FORCE's pupils*
THE INTERPRETER....*Attendant upon the Emperor*
JAPANESE GIRLS
IMPERIAL GUARDS
EMPEROR

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THE LITERARY CLUB

SCENE I:—*A Japanese school. As curtain rises, Japanese girls are seen seated in places at side, singing and laughing. Enter MISS FORCE. Girls salaam.*

MISS FORCE. Good-morning, girls.

GIRLS. Hai, Ojo-San.

MISS FORCE. I hope you all know your lessons to-day, for the Emperor is coming to visit the school, and he may ask you to read or to recite.

MARU. Bah! My no afraid! He will no understand'.

MISS FORCE. Maru, be careful. The Emperor's niece should give good example.

MARU. My no lig study, for because my lig better dance an' sing.

MISS FORCE. The Emperor will be displeased, Maru——

MARU. No! He too exaltedly sleepy to know. He is so much good look.

(GIRLS laugh and clap hands.)

MISS FORCE. Maru, you are a naughty girl to talk so of his augustly exalted highness. He would be angry——

MARU. My tell him every day he very funny. He no min',—he let my do anythings.

MISS FORCE. Yes, I am afraid his imperial

majesty has spoiled you, Maru. But at any rate, when he comes to-day, you must as usual serve him with tea.

MARU. In his serenely honorable cup and saucer?

MISS FORCE. Yes—which no one else may touch. You all know that, girls, do you not? That no one but the Emperor's niece must handle the cup from which he drinks.

(GIRLS *nods heads.*)

GUARDS. (*Outside*) Hai-ai-ai-ai-ee, hai-ai-ai-ai-ee.

MARU. My thinks he come now.

(*Enter EMPEROR preceded by guards and INTERPRETER. When EMPEROR is seated, all, except MISS FORCE, salaam.*)

INTERPRETER. Attention! His glorious sublimity, the Emperor, will honorably condescend to drink tea in this degradedly contemptible institution.

(*The EMPEROR is gradually falling asleep.*)

MISS FORCE. We are augustly blessed.

MARU. (*Running over to EMPEROR*) See—how funny. (*Shaking him*) Wag up, funny man.

(*EMPEROR pats MARU on head. She and other girls serve tea to EMPEROR, INTERPRETER, and MISS FORCE.*)

INTERPRETER. (*To MISS FORCE*) You, American Ojo-San, what in your debased ignorance have you taught these flowers of Japan?

MISS FORCE. Honorable Interpreter, I have taught them to spell, and to read, and to write.

(INTERPRETER *conveys information to EMPEROR who dozes again.*)

INTERPRETER. Let your class ignobly try to read for the Emperor from their American books. (GIRLS *prepare to read.* INTERPRETER *consults EMPEROR*) His Imperial Highness will remove his joy-giving presence from the room. Sleep augustly overcomes him now. He will wonderfully deign to come some other time.

MISS FORCE. Honorably present our thanks to his serene majesty.

MARU. My thinks he is a very funny emperor,—he is so sleep.

MISS FORCE. Maru——

INTERPRETER. Woman, illustriously avoid rebuking the niece of the Emperor. She is transcendently permitted to do and say whatever she likes.

MISS FORCE. I degradedly submit to your counsel.

INTERPRETER. Guards!

(*Exeunt EMPEROR, INTERPRETER and guards.*)

MISS FORCE. Maru, you were a very naughty girl.

MARU. My no care.

(*Noise outside. Women talking in highly pitched voices. MISS FORCE to door. Enter the Literary Club. MISS FORCE greets the several members as old acquaintances.*)

MRS. PAWKINS. (*Walking to desk where vase of flowers rests*) Oh, I do love orchids! (*Ch pronounced as in chin*)

MRS. LAWREY. So this is a Japanese school!

MRS. LOVETT. A Japanese school! How charming!

MRS. PAWKINS. The young leddies is so sweet and simple, all in their pretty kimonies.

MRS. LAWTREY. (*Aside to Miss Force*) Mrs. Pawkins is impossible. We barely tolerate her. Mrs. Pawkins, I request that I, as president of the club, be allowed to do the necessary talking.

MRS. LOVETT. Of course, Mrs. Pawkins, how *could* you?

MRS. PAWKINS. Oh, certainly, certainly, especially at this crissis. I'd be like to collapse (*Pronounced col' ips*) if I had to speak.

MRS. LAWTREY. Miss Force, you are aware, I presume, of the object of our association, the Literary Club.

MISS FORCE. Won't you be seated?

MRS. LAWTREY. For the present,—no.

MRS. LOVETT. Of course not! How could you, Miss Force?

MISS PARDELL. Preposterous!

MISS GRIMES. Absurd!

MRS. LAWTREY. (*Waving the other members into silence*) The object of our club is to promote interest in the best literature——

MRS. PAWKINS. Yes, Brownin', Longfeller, Wadsworth, and all the other celebrit' ties——

MISS PARDELL. Browning! That name! To what heights of bliss it raises me!

MRS. LAWTREY. Ladies, allow me if you please. As I was saying, the laudable object of our club——

MRS. PAWKINS. Her langwich is elegant——

MRS. LAWTREY. (*Continuing*)——is to promote interest in the best literature, and to encourage the literary ambition of such members as possess the ability to write.

MISS FORCE. A wonderful original aim, I am sure.

MRS. LOVETT. The credit all belongs to Mrs. Lawtrey.

MRS. LAWTREY. No compliments, I beg of you.

MRS. PAWKINS. She's of such a conserved disposition, and so retiring!

MISS PARDELL. Retiring, indeed!

MISS GRIMES. "A violet neath a mossy stone."

MRS. LOVETT. But you haven't told Miss Force why we came to Japan, my dear.

MRS. PAWKINS. No! How could you forget that, Mrs. Lawtrey?

MRS. LAWTREY. Do I need to be reminded by you, Mrs. Lovett, or by you, Mrs. Pawkins.

MRS. LOVETT. Not at all, Mrs. Lawtrey.

MRS. PAWKINS. Not at all, ma'am, by no means, you don't.

MRS. LAWTREY. Miss Force, we came to Japan to gather material.

MISS FORCE. To gather material! Why, I don't understand.

MRS. PAWKINS. It's colloquial color we're after——

MRS. LOVETT. She means local color, Miss Force. You see, it's just this way——

MRS. LAWTREY. Pardon *me*, Mrs. Lovett——

MRS. LOVETT. Oh, of course, my dear. But one might be permitted to speak sometimes.

MRS. LAWTREY. Mrs. Lovett, I am surprised. Miss Force, as I intended explaining when I was so rudely interrupted, the Literary Club is here to gather material for a book.

MISS FORCE. A book! What kind, if I may presume to inquire?

MRS. LOVETT. A novel, Miss Force!

MRS. LAWTREY. Miss Force, if you will kindly give me your attention—we are going to write a problem novel.

MISS FORCE. How interesting!

MRS. LOVETT. Yes, and we thought by observing

in your school—(*I will speak, MRS. LAW TREY*)—
and in the streets of this town——

MRS. LAW TREY. Mrs. Lovett!

MRS. LOVETT. (*Continuing*) We could have our material collected by the end of this month, the book written by next, and enough money raised——

MRS. LAW TREY. Mrs. Lovett!

MRS. PAWKINS. She surpasses herself!

MRS. LAW TREY. (*To MRS. PAWKINS*) Kindly reserve your remarks. Mrs. Lovett, you have said enough. Miss Force, with your permission, we shall now examine your class.

MRS. PAWKINS. Do they dance, Miss Force?

(*Members of the Club step back horrified.*)

MRS. LAW TREY. Dance! Mrs. Pawkins, I am horrified. Mrs. Lovett, are you not shocked?

MRS. LOVETT. Indeed I am, Mrs. LawtreY. Of all things to speak of dancing!

MISS PARDELL. Dancing among the Japanese is an art——

MRS. LOVETT. Oh, an art! It's an art, Mrs. LawtreY——

MISS PARDELL. An art that deserves the attention of all cultured persons.

MRS. LOVETT. It relates to culture, you see, Mrs. LawtreY. Art and culture! How they appeal to one!

MISS GRIMES and MISS PARDELL. Art and culture!

MRS. LAW TREY. True! Where art and culture are concerned, one may even sacrifice one's opinions. Let your pupils dance, Miss Force, if they can.

MISS FORCE. Young ladies, prepare for the dance.

(*JAPANESE GIRLS dance.*)

MRS. PAWKINS. (*At beginning of dance*) Oh, where's my lorgnetta! (*Finds her lorgnette through which she observes dance*)

MRS. LAWTREY. (*After dance*) Miss Force, I regret exceedingly that you encourage this pagan dancing among these poor benighted people. Mrs. Lovett, are you attending? Will you express your opinion of this performance?

MRS. LOVETT. I thought it—er—very entertaining——

MRS. LAWTREY. What!

MRS. LOVETT. Well, if not exactly entertaining,—er—what did you think about it, Miss Pardell?

MISS PARDELL. (*Ecstatically*) Oh, the rhythm of it! How intoxicating! Other Members: Intoxicating!

MRS. LOVETT. I'm sure I am extremely surprised to hear any member of the Literary Club use such a word!

MRS. LAWTREY. Miss Force, I think an antidote is necessary.

MRS. PAWKINS. My uncle used to be always telling antidotes. I wish I could remember some now.

MRS. LAWTREY. By an antidote I mean something to counteract the demoralizing influence of this frivolous exhibition. Young minds should be trained to seriousness.

MRS. LOVETT. We might give them a scene from Shakespere. You know, Miss Force, we all, in a modest way, aspire to histrionic expression. At the meetings of the club, we regularly practise scenes from Shakespere.

MISS FORCE. How delightful! I'm sure my pupils would be amused—(*Members of the Club offended*)—I mean instructed by your performance. Mrs. Lawtrey——

MRS. LAWTREY. We must first confer. (*Literary Club goes aside to consult about play. Evident attempt, in pantomime, to suppress* MRS. PAWKINS.

MISS FORCE *instructs pupils to behave politely during performance.* MRS. LAWTREY *coming forward*) We are ready, Miss Force. Attention if you please. We shall present the first scene from Hamlet. I am Horatio, Hamlet's friend——

MRS. LOVETT. And I am Marcellus, one of the officers, you remember, Miss Pardell is Bernardo, and Miss Grimes Francisco.

MISS FORCE. And Mrs. Pawkins?

MRS. LOVETT. Why—er—Mrs. Pawkins is the Ghost.

MRS. LAWTREY. (*Announcing scene*) “Elsinore. A platform before the castle. Francisco at his post.” (MISS GRIMES *struts to the front of the stage*) “Enter to him Bernardo.”

MISS PARDELL. (*Walking towards MISS GRIMES*) “Who's there?”

MISS GRIMES. “Nay, answer me; stand and unfold yourself.”

MISS PARDELL. “Long live the king.”

MISS GRIMES. “Bernardo?”

MISS PARDELL. “He.”

MRS. LOVETT. They do it so well.

MRS. LAWTREY. Perfectly, I think.

MISS PARDELL. “’Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.”

MISS GRIMES. “For this relief much thanks. Stand, ho! Who goes there?”

MRS. LAWTREY. (*Approaching with MRS. LOVETT*) “Friends to this ground.”

MRS. LOVETT. “And liegemen to the Dane.”

MISS GRIMES. “Give you good-night!” (*Withdraws to back of stage*)

MRS. LOVETT. “Holla! Bernardo!”

MISS PARDELL. “Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.”

MRS. LOVETT. “What, has this thing appeared again to-night?”

MISS PARDELL. “I have seen nothing——”

MRS. LAWTREY. "Tush—tush—'twill not appear."

MISS PARDELL.

"Last night of all

When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one——"

MRS. LOVETT. "Peace, break thee off; look where it comes again."

(MRS. PAWKINS *walks slowly round to front of stage. Japanese girls laugh and clap hands.*)

MARU. (*Running over to MRS. PAWKINS*) I lig much her high sublimity, Mrs. Ghos'.

MRS. LAWTREY. An unmannerly child!

MISS FORCE. Sh! She's the Emperor's niece. He is ruled by her. Our lives would be worth nothing if she but wished our deaths. (MISS FORCE *and Literary Club, except MRS. PAWKINS, consult aside*)

MARU. (*To MRS. PAWKINS*) I lig you, Mrs. Ghos'. You are mos' gloriously the bes'. You write a book too?

MRS. PAWKINS. No, no, my dear. I just collect material.

MARU. Collec', collec',—wha's tha'? Tag things lig all Americans—ne?

MRS. PAWKINS. Yes,—take. The poor child don't understand good English.

MARU. Then I gif Mrs. Ghos' something, but she not tell. (MARU, *taking from table the EMPEROR'S cup and saucer, presents them to MRS. PAWKINS*)

MRS. PAWKINS. Chiny! Of all things, I do love chiny. It's so select.

MARU. But hide! No let see Mrs. Love an' Mrs. Law.

MRS. PAWKINS. I comperhend, child. They'd want it for their selves. I'll hide it safe. (*Places cup and saucer in her handbag*) And thank you Miss—er——

MARU. Maru.

MISS FORCE. I shall dismiss them, and then we can have a nice long talk. I am so anxious to hear more news of the dear people at home. Young ladies (*Rings gong*) recess. (*Japanese girls go out in line bowing and smiling at visitors.* MISS FORCE seated between MRS. LAW TREY and MRS. LOVETT, MRS. PAWKINS seated at a little distance from them. MISS PARDELL and MISS GRIMES walk round the room examining objects of interest) Now, tell me all the news, and all the gossip you know, about that dear little town way off in Jersey.

MRS. PAWKINS. Dear New Jersey! When I'm there, I love to oleander about the scrubbery, pursuing Shakespere.

MRS. LAW TREY. (*Ignoring MRS. PAWKINS*) Well, to begin with that ugly old Miss Tracey is married at last.

MRS. LOVETT. Yes, though we don't approve of the match at all. Do we, Mrs. Lawtrey?

MRS. LAW TREY. No, indeed. That poor boy. Why, to think, Miss Force, he just had his thirtieth birthday last month. His mother is heart-broken.

MRS. LOVETT. It's exceedingly sad. But one can't put old heads on young shoulders, as Mr. Lovett keeps telling me.

MRS. LAW TREY. Telling you?

MRS. LOVETT. Yes, he says I'll always be young——

(*Noise outside. Enter INTERPRETER with Japanese guards.*)

INTERPRETER. Hands up! All in this room are under arrest.

(MISS FORCE and members of club stand with hands up.)

MISS FORCE. This is a mistake——

MRS. LAW TREY. An outrage!

MRS. LOVETT. When Mr. Lovett hears of this!

MRS. PAWKINS. I'm sure we all consider it a flagrant shame.

INTERPRETER. Silence! I have here an order from the Emperor to search this place for the honorable cup and saucer of his imperial gloriousness. (*To guards*) Guard the prisoners. (INTERPRETER searches room)

MISS FORCE. It will be all right, I'm sure. There's nothing to fear.

MRS. LAW TREY. They shall be punished for forcing me to stand in this undignified position.

MRS. LOVETT. When my husband discovers their perfidy——

INTERPRETER. Silence! (*To guards*) Search the prisoners.

(*Prisoners protest screaming.*)

MRS. LAW TREY. Help——

MRS. LOVETT. Never!

MISS PARDELL. Ladies, be calm——

INTERPRETER. (*Finding cup and saucer in MRS. PAWKINS' bag*) Stop! It is here! No mercy must be shown.

MRS. PAWKINS. Oh, sir, I assure you I'm a perfectly obnoxious character——

INTERPRETER. Guards, place this woman under arrest.

(*Commotion among the other members of the Club.*)

MISS GRIMES. Mrs. Pawkins——

MISS PARDELL. "'Tis true 'tis pity; and pity 'tis 'tis true."

MRS. LAWTREY. I always said that we never should have admitted Mrs. Pawkins to our Literary Club.

MRS. LOVETT. Of course, Mrs. Pawkins, how *could* you?

CURTAIN.

SCENE II:—*Court of the EMPEROR. At back of stage a raised divan for EMPEROR. On right, the witness stand. On left, stand for prisoner. INTERPRETER reading from long scroll. Enter in line, two by two, the Japanese girls followed by MISS FORCE. MISS FORCE gives signal for girls to stand.*

MISS FORCE. (*To INTERPRETER*) What place do you augustly assign to these young ladies?

INTERPRETER. Any place you transcendently desire.

MISS FORCE. (*To Japanese girls*) What,—talking in ranks? And where is Maru?

GIRLS. Maru? (*Signify their ignorance of her whereabouts by shaking heads*)

MISS FORCE. No one knows? This is dreadful! To your places please. (*Girls go to right side of stage*) I must go look for her.

INTERPRETER. (*To MISS FORCE as she attempts to leave*) Stop! You must not degradedly go for the Emperor's niece. It is her high serene liberty to do what she pleases.

MISS FORCE. But she may be lost in the city——

INTERPRETER. Do you contemptibly defy the

law? If you do, I must admirably place you under arrest.

MISS FORCE. Oh, no. (*Enter MISS PARDELL*) Miss Pardell, have you seen the Emperor's niece anywhere?

MISS PARDELL. I have seen no one. As I came along, I diverted myself by indulging in the luxury of dreams and wandering thoughts. Like the poet, Wordsworth, I experienced those

“Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving round in worlds not realized——”

(*Enter MISS GRIMES.*)

MISS GRIMES. I thought I heard some one quoting from the Imitations of Immortality,—and it was you, Miss Pardell! Oh, you dreamer!

MISS PARDELL. Miss Grimes, your frivolity is unbecoming.

(*Enter MRS. LOVETT and MRS. LAWTREY.*)

MRS. LOVETT. Yes, it's just as I said, Mrs. Lawtrey, Mrs. Pawkins was impossible from the first. To think that she's brought us to this, that we're dragged literally dragged into court!

MRS. LAWTREY. Well, if my advice had been followed at the establishment of the Club, we should not now be in such a case, for it is a real case, as Shakespere employs the words.

MRS. LOVETT. Good-morning, Miss Force. You really look depressed. But this shocking situation has us all more or less on the verge of hysterics. If Mr. Lovett were only here!

MISS FORCE. I'm worried about Maru——

MRS. LAWTREY. (*To MISS PARDELL*) I wonder,

Miss Pardell, that you wear your usual gay attire on so sad an occasion.

MISS PARDELL. The æsthetic never appeals to you, madame——

MISS GRIMES. As for me, I feel with the poet that

“There has passed a glory from the earth.”

MRS. LOVETT. Don't be depressed, my dear. Depression is most unfavorable to the development of creative genius, and we must not forget our book, you know.

INTERPRETER. Silence! The Emperor!

(*As EMPEROR enters, preceded by guards, all Japanese salaam. EMPEROR sleepily mounts dais where he proceeds to dose. INTERPRETER with difficulty confers with him. He nods assent.*)

INTERPRETER. Bring in the prisoner.

(*Guards exeunt for prisoner. Murmuring and excitement among witnesses even after entrance of MRS. PAWKINS.*)

INTERPRETER. Silence! His serene and illustrious majesty exaltedly commands me to open this case. The degradedly trembling prisoner is charged with suspiciously stealing the Emperor's most august and sublime cup and saucer. If she will inanely confess her guilt, the Emperor will leniently imprison her for life instead of awkwardly condemning her ignominiously to death. Woman, are you outrageously guilty or not?

MRS. PAWKINS. Oh, sir,—not, if it's all the same to you.

INTERPRETER. Contempt of court! Guards, remove the prisoner.

(*Guards attempt to remove MRS. PAWKINS.*)

MISS PARDELL. Hold! It is enacted in the laws of the city that every accused person have a trial.

MRS. LOVETT. (*To MRS. LAWTREY*) For all the world, like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*!

MRS. LAWTREY. I am surprised at a young woman speaking in public!

INTERPRETER. (*Having consulted with EMPEROR*) His vigorous highness consents to a trial. Will anyone speak for the prisoner?

MRS. LAWTREY. No, indeed.

INTERPRETER. Then I, as prosecuting attorney, shall examine the witnesses. Miss Grimes. (*MISS GRIMES to witness stand*) Woman, your age.

MISS GRIMES. What!

INTERPRETER. How old are you?

MISS GRIMES. Oh, this is so sudden——

INTERPRETER. Answer me.

MISS GRIMES. Why, your—your highness—I'm—er—out of the twenties.

INTERPRETER. Very good. Do you know the person at the bar?

MISS GRIMES. At the bar? Oh, yes. I understand. I have some acquaintance with her.

INTERPRETER. Incriminating evidence. The testimony of this witness is deplorably invaluable. It will have superlatively great weight with his energetic majesty. (*EMPEROR snores*) The witness is dismissed, Miss Pardell. (*MISS PARDELL to witness stand*) Can you most unjustly inform me whether the prisoner has ever in her lifetime exuberantly manifested a taste for china?

MISS PARDELL. Sir, I am convinced that Mrs. Pawkins is at present the victim of untoward circumstances and an unfortunate environment in

youth. I have never observed in her any tendency to æstheticism.

INTERPRETER. Then she must be punished.

MISS PARDELL. Hold, Sir.

“The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven—

INTERPRETER. Guards, remove the witness.

MISS PARDELL. (*Continuing*)

“Upon the place beneath; it is thrice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes—”

(MISS PARDELL *continues the quotation until she is removed from the witness stand by the guards*)

INTERPRETER. Miss Force. (MISS FORCE *to witness stand*) What is your occupation?

MISS FORCE. Your honor, I am most degradedly a teacher in one of the imperial schools.

INTERPRETER. You have seen the honorable cup saucer?

MISS FORCE. Often, your honor.

INTERPRETER. Did you see the ridiculously immovable prisoner steal the honorable cup and saucer?

MISS FORCE. No, your honor.

MRS. PAWKINS. If I might be allowed to suggest——

INTERPRETER. Silence! This witness is dismissed. Mrs. Lawtrey. (MRS. LAWTREY *to witness stand*) Madame, do you know the contemptible prisoner?

MRS. LAWTREY. To my exceeding regret,—yes—I do.

INTERPRETER. Did you see her appropriate his serene highness' exaggeratedly honorable cup and saucer?

MRS. LAWTREY. No, your honor. But I've al-

ways had my suspicions of Mrs. Pawkins. Moreover, my friend, Mrs. Lovett told me——

MRS. LOVETT. Mrs. Lawtrey, I request you not to drag my name before the public.

MRS. LAWTREY. Mrs. Lovett, I am amazed at your lack of public spirit. (*To INTERPRETER*) As I was saying, Mrs. Lovett told me——

MRS. LOVETT. Mrs. Lawtrey, I insist. And anyway, I think one might be allowed to give one's own testimony.

MRS. LAWTREY. This is unbearable!

INTERPRETER. Silence! The witness is dismissed.

MRS. LAWTREY. But, Sir, you have not yet taken my testimony.

INTERPRETER. Madam, you are dismissed.

MRS. LAWTREY. I *will* not submit.

INTERPRETER. Guards arrest the witness for contempt of court.

(*Guards arrest MRS. LAWTREY, placing her beside MRS. PAWKINS on the prisoners' stand. Commotion among the other witnesses MRS. LAWTREY weeps.*)

MRS. PAWKINS. Oh, don't take it to heart so, ma'am. It don't feel half bad when you get used to it.

INTERPRETER. The next witness! Mrs. Lovett.

(*MRS. LOVETT to witness stand.*)

MRS. LOVETT. Oh, sir, I'm so abashed.

INTERPRETER. Your remark is out of order. Is Mrs. Pawkins a friend of yours?

MRS. LOVETT. I should say not. She's no friend of mine, I assure you.

INTERPRETER. But you know her?

MRS. LOVETT. I admit the impeachment. I know her only too well.

INTERPRETER. Has she any standing in the absurdly established Literary Club?

MRS. LOVETT. No standing whatever. In fact, where the Club is concerned, Mrs. Pawkins is absolutely null and void.—Miss Pardell, what is that line in Wordsworth about a wandering voice?

MISS PARDELL.

“Oh, cuckoo, shall I call thee bird
Or but a wandering voice?”

MRS. LOVETT. Oh, yes. Well, (*To INTERPRETER*) Mrs. Pawkins, is, so to speak, but a “wandering voice.” The Literary Club, moreover, assumes no responsibility for her conduct.

INTERPRETER. You saw her steal the honorable cup and saucer?

MRS. LOVETT. No, no,—though I suppose we must all yield to our suspicions. However, if my opinion is worth anything—

INTERPRETER. Madame, it is not. You are dismissed.

MRS. LOVETT. Under the circumstances, I obey, Sir. But let me assure you that you would not dare address me in so audacious a manner if Mr. Lovett were only here. (*MRS. LOVETT descends from stand*)

INTERPRETER. Guards!—

(*Enter MARU.*)

GIRLS. Maru!

MISS FORCE. Maru, where have you been?

MARU. My lig run away for liddle w'ile.

(*MARU runs over to EMPEROR. Excited talking among witnesses and Japanese girls. INTERPRETER consults EMPEROR.*)

INTERPRETER. Silence! His energetic serenity, the Emperor, having thoroughly considered the valuable evidence offered by the miserably ungracious witnesses, pronounces Mrs. Pawkins guilty of sacrilegiously stealing the honorable cup and saucer. (MARU *rises quickly*) The said Mrs. Pawkins must suffer for her crime the penalty of death. (*Murmurs among the witnesses and girls*) The sentence will be carried out as soon as his vigorous majesty has leisure and inclination to sign the warrant.

MARU. Wha'! Mrs. Ghos' die? No! Why?

INTERPRETER. I have generously announced the unmitigated reason: She has surreptitiously appropriated the Emperor's honorable cup and saucer.

MARU. (*Laughing*) No! Funny man! Funny Emperor! You bos' wrong. Poor Mrs. Ghos' no steal.

INTERPRETER. No steal! I myself outrageously found the honorable cup and saucer in her ridiculous hand bag.

MARU. Yes, yes, but I—Maru—gif the honorable cup and saucer to Mrs. Pawkins.

INTERPRETER. You? (*Talking among witnesses and girls. INTERPRETER consults EMPEROR who nods sleepily*) The trial is over. The Emperor's niece has spoken. Mrs. Pawkins is outrageously acquitted.

GIRLS. (*Clapping hands*) Hai, Mrs. Ghos'!

MARU. Mrs. Ghos', Maru is so sorry.

MRS. PAWKINS. (*Descending from the stand*) Don't mention it, my dear. I'm so relieved now I'm not going to suffer an ignominious death.

MRS. LOVETT. But Mrs. Lawtrey, my dear. What are we to do about Mrs. Lawtrey?

MRS. PAWKINS. If I could preserve her. (*Whispers to MARU who runs over to speak with the INTERPRETER*)

MISS PARDELL. We cannot, of course, allow the president of the Literary Club to be sent to jail.

MRS. LOVETT. No, indeed. The President of the Literary Club!

MARU. (*Having consulted with the INTERPRETER*) Yes, she mus' die.

LITERARY CLUB. What!

MARU. Yes, Mr. Interpreter say Mrs. Law is a contemp' of cour'. She mus' die.

MISS PARDELL. It cannot be!

MRS. LOVETT. Beg your uncle to pardon her, little girl.

MARU. Ah, he is so stric', and fierce. He think all time how he can kill some peoples.

MRS. LOVETT. I had no idea the Emperor was so violent. But plead with him, Maru.

MARU. My afraid no use, but my try.

(MARU and INTERPRETER confer with EMPEROR.)

MISS PARDELL. "To be or not to be—that is the question."

MISS GRIMES. If one could take arms against a sea of troubles.

MISS FORCE. Matters are **certainly** looking dark.

MRS. PAWKINS. I'm **sure I'm sorry** the Emperor is so implacable.

INTERPRETER. **Silence!** His august and serene highness, though uncontrollably incensed at the ungraciously contemptuous conduct of the prisoner, through the angelic intercession of his admirably perfect niece, Maru, condescendingly grants pardon to Mrs. Lawtrey——

MISS GRIMES. **Good!**

MRS. LOVETT. I'm so glad Mrs. Lawtrey. (MRS. LOVETT crosses over to MRS. LAW TREY who begins to descend from the stand)

MISS PARDELL. 'Tis well.

MRS. PAWKINS. It's very impassionate of his highness.

INTERPRETER. (*Continuing*) On one condition.
CLUB. Condition!

INTERPRETER. His gracious and sublime majesty grants pardon to Mrs. Lawtrey——

MRS. LOVETT. Yes——

INTERPRETER. On condition—(*Excited murmuring among witnesses and girls*)—your attention please—(*Silence*) that she most ridiculously resign as President of the Literary Club—in favor of the learned and accomplished Mrs. Pawkins.

(MRS. LAWTREY screams and faints in MRS. LOVETT'S arms. Jap girls, MISS FORCE, MISS PARDELL, MARU, MISS GRIMES surround MRS. PAWKINS who, bowing and smiling, receives their congratulations.)

CURTAIN.

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